An Essay on

Medical Science

Respectfully Submitted

To the Faculty of the

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of

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The rise and progress of the arts and sciences, have ever resulted from the necessities of men. Hence, Medical Science, was among the primitive requirements of our race. The intellect of man, ever prompting him to provide for his many wants, would naturally lead him, to seek relief, from pain, and the various ills, to which mankind is heir. At what period in the history of our race, disease first commenced its ravages upon the human frame, is unknown, but probably at a very early period, man became subject to disease,

from noxious food or traumatic causes, and doubtless as he advanced in civilization, he became more and more exposed to morbid influences, and pestilential miasms. The simple habits of life of the primitive ages, exempting him from serious disease, his ills required but simple medication. At this time he sought relief in the simple herbs he found growing at his feet, guided neither by law, nor the teachings of experience, they were selected by chance and applied without method, at times pointed out by divanation, or revealed by accident. As civilization advanced the art being held in the esteem its importance demanded, the simple shepherds who before had been its

administrators, yeilded their art to the sacerdotal order, who mingled it with mythology, and veiled its truthes in mystery, calling upon the gods to preside over its administrations, and offering sacrefices for their propitious intervention. But the mind of man being ever progressive, the philosophers dissatisfied with the mysteries with which they had enveloped it, and the base ends to which it had been perverted distroyed its idolatrous associations, and disclosed its mysteries, once more establishing it among the useful sciences. From that period until the present time it has continued to advance, and though its course has been by no means uniform it has ever been progressing.

The claims of this science are, and ever have been, universally acknoledged. Its worth and usefulness must be admitted "ex necessitate" alike by the jewelled monarch and the humble peasant. the aged patriarch, and the infant child, for disease, and death, know no distinctions.

The science of Medicine, at the present day, is divided into various departments, a Knowledge of each of which, is essential to him who would practice the healing art successfully, for they are but links in an unbroken chain, or they constitute an arch, from which, if any stone be taken the structure falls.

For the cornerstones, or the foundations of this arch, are laid the Kindred Sciences, Anatomy, and Physiology.

upon which as a superstructure, we have on the one hand, Surgery, Pathology, Botany, and Materia Medica while on the other, we find Obsteterics, and Chemistry, Pharmacy, and the Institutes of Medicine. Thus far had the disciples of Galen and Hypocrates, progressed in the upbuilding of this arch but it was still incomplete, they yet required the Keystone, which was to unite the two segments and bind them into one. For this had they been striving ever since the establishment of the Alexandrian School, at which time medicine made a transition from an art, to a science and was ranked among the learned professions. This was a universal "Law of Cure".

Without this law, they were veiled in shadows of doubt and uncertainty, they had no light by which they might be guided, in the administration of remedial agents, directed only by the dim, and flickering rays of Empyricism or the still more delusive teachings of theoretical dogmas. But we as Homœopathists of the present day have that law: we have the keystone which binds the arch so firmly that though ages shall elapse it shall never fall.

In the acquirement of the Science of medicine Anatomy must ever be the foundation Stone the great starting point in our investigations. For it discloses the mysteries of our organizations, teaches the wonderful mechanism of our frames.

it unfolds the amazing structure of the various organs in which are carried on those wonderful physiological and chemical changes and decompositions which provide the material by which the worn out and delapidated portions of our systems are again restored. It shows us in the construction of the osseous framework, the most beautiful design, the most astonishing skill and wisdom. for there is not the smallest tubercle or most minute foramen which has not its use, and is not essential in securing the perfection of the entire frame. It unfolds and demonstrates the construction of that mysterious organ, in which the mind abides, and reason sits enthroned.

It traces the nerves, in their tortuous course, spreading like telegraphic wires, in every portion of our system, the medium by which the mind holds converse with external things. Medical Science, also requires a knowledge of Physiology, or the Science of life. This is necessary that we may understand the functions which the various organs perform and the uses of the multifarious tissues. By the study of this branch we learn in what manner the different organs in their nomal state perform the duties assigned them, and the character of the various secretions found in the organism, so that by an examination of them we may determine whether the fountains from which they emanate have

been disturbed. It requires an acquaintance with Obsteterics, and the art of Midwifery, that most delicate branch of the profession, in which the lives of two individuals are consumed, the mother and her offspring. This branch of the seience relates not only to the present generation, but to the welfare of beings yet unborn, to the preservation, and perpetuation of our race.

It requires moreover a Knoledge of Surgery, that most practical branch of the profession whose province is is to adjust displacements, and remove unserviceable parts. The Surgeon must not only acquaint himself with the theory of diseases, but with the modus operandi by which he is to relieve them

and the mechanical adjuvants of the art, perfecting himself in those manual operations, which he will be called upon to perform.

Again, Knowledge of Pathology, or the Physiology of disease, is essential that we may understand the theory, causes, effects, and diagnosis of diseases, that he may know what organs are affected, and what abnormal changes are taking place within the hidden recesses of our systems.

Chemistry, and Botany, likewise claim the attention of him who is striving for the acquirement of Medical Science, the one, that he may investigate and understand the composition of the various substances we find in nature

the fixed and immutable laws which govern their actions and combinations. The other, that he may possess a knoledge of the vegitable kingdom, and be able to distinguish such plants as possess medicinal qualities from those deadly and obnoxious ones which he is to avoid and although in foreign lands, select such means as nature may require for the removal of disease and the restoration of the sick. A knoledge of Pharmacy is essential, that he may be able to prepare with skill the various preperations which may be required, combineing the unerring certainty of the botanist with the delicate manipulations of the chemist, and to know the most reliable method of preserving such

remedial agents, as nature has placed within his reach. And lastly, it is absolutely necessary that he have an intimate acquaintance with the Materia Medica: that he know the properties of medicinal agents, their pathogenetic effects upon the human organism, and the mode of their administration. As well might the artizan attempt to construct some delicate and complicated machinery, without a knowledge of the tools he is to use, or the organist to charm our ears with notes of melody, without an acquaintance with the various Stops, and Keys, of the instrument upon which he is to perform, as for him who would acquire a knowledge of medicine, to attempt to alleviate the woes, and heal the wounds, of suffering humanity, without

a perfect knowledge of the sanitive weapons he is to employ. With a knowledge of these departments of the science, and with his mind fully imbued with the great truth "Similia Similibus curantur" he may go forth to battle with disease, to meet the epidemic scourge, and stay the dreaded pestilence which devastates the land. With this precept for his guide, like the compass of the storm tossed mariner, ever pointing with unerring hand to the polar star of truth, he may go forth offering himself as pilot to the foundering bark upon the ocean of disease, confiding in his power to moor it safely in the port of health.